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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 002312

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/23/2028
TAGS: [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PNAT](#) [MOPS](#) [MCAP](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR WASHINGTON VISIT OF IRAQI MINISTER
OF INTERIOR JAWAD AL-BOLANI

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (S) Iraqi Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bolani is a hard working, honest broker achieving real but fragile success in his efforts to rid the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) of corruption and sectarianism. He arrives in Washington against a backdrop of increasing good news about security in Iraq and about his Ministry of the Interior. One year ago, critics took aim at the corruption and sectarianism within the Ministry even calling for the National Police to be disbanded. A year on, steps by Minister Bolani are making tangible progress in the MOI and Police, though all agree they have far to travel as they refocus from essentially paramilitary duties to law enforcement. Undoubtedly, the Ministry still faces problems of corruption, sectarianism and a need for greater professionalism as well. Bolani's visit affords an opportunity to lay groundwork for the evolution of U.S. partnership with MOI toward "peacetime" lines. Bolani openly supports a continued U.S. security presence and spoke publicly and forcefully on behalf of signing a Status of Forces Agreement with the U.S. The visit also provides us an opportunity to encourage him to make his voice heard on this issue both within the government and publicly. End summary.

2. (S/NF) Backdrop: Bolani is a religious Shi'a, political independent, making him able to work across ethnic and sectarian lines, but also leaving him vulnerable to pressure from Shi'a parties, including Shi'a deputies within his own ministry. His reform efforts within MOI reveal the growing confidence of the GOI as it finds new ways to assert its sovereignty. Like many members of the GOI, Bolani recognizes the need for continued support from Coalition Forces but also supports the notion of a timetable for the withdrawal of combat troops. During a July 19, meeting, Bolani told POL-MIL Minister Counselor that he spoke in favor of the SOFA at a session of Parliament and was later thanked by the Minister of Foreign Affairs for his eloquent defense of the agreement. Bolani is well aware that his ministry, and law enforcement training measures, in particular, will likely need sustained USG funding for at least several more years.

Accomplishments:

THE IRAQI NATIONAL POLICE

3. (SBU) One year ago, the Congressionally-funded Jones Report strongly criticized the Ministry of Interior for its corruption and sectarianism, reserving special emphasis for the problems within the National Police (the MoI's Gendarmerie-like element, not to be confused with the larger Iraqi Police Services) and calling for it to be disbanded. A

year later and under the leadership of Minister Bolani, some important changes have taken place. Within the Iraqi National Police, each of the nine brigade commanders in place when the Jones Report was published has been replaced, as have 27 battalion commanders. The effort to professionalize the National Police now also includes professional training and leader development. By October 2007, all members of the National Police Brigade completed brigade level training. Over 1500 National Police received training at the Carabinieri Training Camp (the first graduates of that program - the National Emergency Response Unit - acquitted themselves extremely well during the initial phases of the Operation Charge of the Knights, to clear Basra of JAM forces). The Ministry is currently assessing courses of action to double the number of graduates of this program - run by the Italian Carabinieri.

MINISTERIAL REFORMS

¶4. (SBU) When Coalition Forces liberated Iraq, the MOI employed approximately 60,000 personnel. The total now stands at 441,807, and is projected to exceed 474,000 by December 2008, largely through the assimilation of over 80,000 Facilities Protection Service personnel. It is also expected to assume administrative oversight for the Sons of Iraq, 19,000 of whom have already been hired (see para 6 for details). This enormous growth brings with it administrative challenges requiring additional support personnel, supplies, infrastructure, institutional-training capacity and leadership development programs. This year, the MOI developed its own strategic plan and is now using the plan to

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evaluate itself; the only ministry in Iraq currently able to do so. There are a total of 91 advisors in the MOI. 76 are from the U.S. and, of those, 74 are military and two are civilians.

¶5. (C) Thus far, the Police have functioned more in a counterinsurgency role than in a traditional civil rule of law role. As Iraq transitions from a Counterinsurgency model of policing to a Rule of Law model and from a confession-based justice system to an evidentiary-based system, the development of criminology and forensics capabilities will be paramount. Likewise, the need for a reliable internal affairs capacity and 'police ethic' will continue to ferret out irreconcilables and criminals. These efforts will continue to require a long-term commitment of U.S. cooperation in helping Iraq to develop such capacities.

SONS OF IRAQ (SOI)

¶6. (C) The Sons of Iraq are the locally-recruited, primarily Sunni security forces, formerly known as Concerned Local Citizens, who number approximately 80,000 and are paid by Coalition Forces. PM Maliki and MNF-I recently agreed that the SOI should transition to complete Iraqi control. To date, approximately 19,000 have been taken into the MOI and Bolani is willing to accept more - as long as he has the ability to place the new assets in locales where the police are currently understaffed and they are needed most. (The question of the GOI taking over the SOI program is politically charged, as many Sunni are anxious that the Government intends to disband the program rather than transition members into the security forces and vocational programs, as intended.)

Challenges:

¶7. (S/NF) Despite the gains and the cautious optimism for continued success at the MOI, ministerial capacity - force management, budget execution, and national-to-tactical logistics and sustainment remain challenges as does continued unacceptable levels of corruption, sectarianism and the need

for greater professionalism. Operations earlier this year in Basra and Baghdad posed a serious challenge to the nascent law enforcement apparatus in Iraq. Police personnel manning unfortified stations and checkpoints were confronted with large, aggressive insurgent forces beyond their capability to handle. Some understandably withdrew from their positions, others fled against orders to the contrary, and still others failed to report for duty. Many police units, however, stood their ground, especially when back-up support arrived. Other police officers had their families threatened if they reported for duty.

¶8. (S/NF) In coordination with internal security efforts in Basra and Sadr City, led by PM Maliki, Iraqi police forces performed very effectively in operations that were ultimately successful. Subsequent investigations by the MoI have led to actions being taken against some offending personnel. Some were transferred, others ordered to take remedial training, and still others were fired. Vulnerable key police stations and check points are also being hardened as a consequence of these operations.

¶9. (S/NF) As the MOI stands up its own internal court system to investigate and prosecute corrupt officers, Bolani needs to ensure complete transparency and openness in the court's operations. Likewise, he needs to push for a more professional police force, consolidating the gains of the last twelve months while strengthening a professional police ethic through more frequent police training and leadership development programs. Finally, Bolani also needs to clarify the relationship, from a law enforcement perspective, between the central government and the provinces, particularly as it relates to command and control. Compounding this issue is the requirement to transition from military-led, intelligence based counterinsurgency efforts to civil, warrant-based apprehensions. The keys to overcoming these challenges are found in better pay for officers; better equipment (including weapons, ammunition, fuel for vehicles and supplies); and developing police confidence through the implementation of an effective Internal Affairs Division as well as an effective Inspector General's Office.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK/SOFA

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¶10. (S/NF) In a July 19 meeting with POL-MIL Minister Counselor, Bolani assured Ambassador Ries that he believes an agreement is in both Iraq's and America's interest. Bolani, like most members of the GOI, are keen to ensure that any agreement not limit Iraqi sovereignty or be seen as doing so.

However, as one of the responsible parties for security in Iraq, he is not keen to be left "home alone." He is supportive of an agreement and particularly continues to welcome USG assistance in the law enforcement arena.

NEIGHBORS PROCESS

¶11. (C) Minister Bolani was involved in the Neighbors Process Ministerial meeting and in talks with his counterparts in Turkey and Syria. The visit affords an opportunity for a much wider conversation with him about counter-terrorism challenges facing Iraq, including, development of border security, cooperation with Turkey, as well as his estimate of Syria's willingness to help, and others.

BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

¶12. (S/NF) Jawad Karim al-Bolani is an independent Shi'a politician. His independence suggests he can work across ethnic and sectarian lines. Bolani publicly said his Ministry's priorities include combating sectarianism, rooting out corruption, and addressing human rights violations. He

also emphasized the need to control Iraq's borders and strengthen the public's trust in the police.

¶13. (S/NF) Bolani appears genuine in his attempt to improve the efficiency and accountability of the MOI. He often reassigns corrupt or poor performing leaders to positions with less authority. In November 2007, he said publicly that the MOI needed to exclude people with sectarian or political affiliations, and in September 2007 he dismissed 195 MOI employees allegedly affiliated with the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM).

In March 2007, Bolani dismissed 500 police officers in Ad Diwaniyah province who refused to perform assigned tasks, and he has suggested that proficient officers be promoted, offering individual awards to raise morale.

¶14. (S/NF) The Minister is respected in the government and the MoI for his independence and his brave decision making processes. He has also developed a team of senior MoI leaders who more confident of their own abilities and share his passion of building Iraqi's police forces into a respected and effective arm of the Government of Iraq. His subordinate leaders are committed to manning, training, equipping, and policing the force. Moreover, the minister effectively gained \$1.7 billion in supplemental funding recently this year from the GoI, he looks more broadly than just his own ministry, and is probably the most traveled minister in the government.

¶15. (S/NF) Bolani was born on 1 November 1960 in Baghdad. His family hails from the Ad Diwaniyah area. Bolani earned a B.S. in mechanical engineering from Baghdad's Institute of Technology in 1984. He was a member of the Ba'th Party and served in the Iraqi Air Force from 1984 until 1999, when he reached the rank of colonel. He left the military to become part owner in a glass and furniture business, where he worked during 1999-2003. He served as chairman of the Transitional National Assembly's Water Committee in 2005. He does not speak English.

CROCKER